

March 18th, 2009

To: All members of the Montana Senate Business, Labor, and Economic Affairs
Committee

Re: House Bill 400

My name is Brad Martens, and I am the owner/operator of the Rhinoceros Inc. Missoula tavern, and a member of the MTA. I have operated the Rhinoceros in Missoula for 21 Years! Other obligations have kept me from attending this hearing but I want to state for the record that I'm in "Flavor" of HB400.

Industry in Montana is changing and the Bar/Restaurant industry is no different. Being able to compete and keep up with the changing markets is paramount with our industry. Keeping a well trained and knowledgeable staff to explain to customers about these product changes is a task that our industry is willing and able to address.

Having 50 beers on tap (the largest in the state) I always strive to have Beers that are unique to different regions and countries of the U.S. and the World. With the law as it is I'm rather limited to these resources. As you will here from different Breweries, specialties beers make up about 20% of their inventory. These styles of beer, Belgium's, Imperials, Conditioned Ales and Barley Wines are but a few beers or styles that traditionally will exceed current legal limits. A lot of these styles have to have a profile to obtain recognition as a Imperial Stout or a Belgium Ale. In certain instances this means a higher alcohol level. With this higher level of alcohol comes a higher price tag. This is due to the added amount of ingredients that is required to make these beers.

A domestic beer that sells or \$2.50 could not be duplicated with say a Barley Wine. Barley Wines would range at a cost of \$6.50 for a 14oz glass. Keeping in mind that the consumer is trained and educated by our staff about these styles of beer makes for a rewarding experience to the palate. People that are looking for these styles of beers are not drinking for the effect of the beer rather the taste and the uniqueness of these styles.

I hope that you will pass HB400 to enrich our communities with styles of beer that they will not have to purchase out of state but rather enjoy in our own communities.

Cheers Brad Martens